

Tennessee State University

Standard 1B- Pilot Study

TSU Rising Junior Examination

The intent of administering the ETS Academic Profile (long form) as the Rising Junior Examination was to provide the University with an index of the performance of its students in general education at the end of the sophomore year and to use this information as one source of data for making improvements in instruction. While information is available on national performance on the Academic Profile and would be a factor in TSU's use of its students' data, the primary goal was to establish a beginning data bank from the performance of TSU students. This was done over the past three years. The availability of this data to faculty and students represents a source for immediate comparisons from discipline to discipline and year to year. Performance over the three year period also provides a more "valid" basis for comparing TSU students to national performance.

TSU students are currently required to take the Rising Junior Examination as a preliminary step in the move from the general education core curriculum to their major fields. One current goal for Academic Affairs and all academic departments will be to analyze the effectiveness of requiring the ETS Profile for all sophomores and then posted to the student's records before the student is accepted into Upper Division Status allowing them to register for 300-400 level courses. The Requirements for this test and the testing schedule are posted in the Course Schedule (attached in 1.B.backup material). The table below indicates the number of students tested and posted means for each year of the cycle.

Cycle Year	# Tested	Mean Score	Difference
Year 1 2000-2001			
Year 2 2001-2002	668	433.21	
Year 3 2002-2003	607	434.70	+1.49
Year 4 2003-2004			
Year 5 2004-2005			

At TSU there are two faculty committees reviewing the results of the Rising Junior Examination. One committee was specifically charged with assessing the usefulness of the Standard Form of the Academic Profile as a part of the academic program. That committee developed a report in 2001 that is being used to direct our efforts in using the ETS Profile (long Form). The Committee and the University acknowledges that testing like this is just one measure of the student's mastery of general educational skills and are extremely cautious in using test results for remediation purposes.

The second committee is reviewing the results of the Academic Profile as one aspect of evaluating the general education course requirements at the university. This

Committee was formed in 2003 as the Standing TSU General Education Committee and was charged with reviewing and approving all general education courses proposed for the new 41 hour TBR general education core. The new General education core consisted of six major field areas with common competencies required for each course as part of that major area. Over the next year this Committee will review the results (means) of the ETS Academic Profile (long form) against specific competencies indicated to improve test scores.

To facilitate interpretation of the results of the Academic Profile a workshop was held during the Spring 2003 semester and the presenter was the Director for Higher Education Assessment from Educational Testing Service. Faculty members on both committees were invited, as were the heads of all academic departments and administrators involved with any aspect of performance funding. One purpose of the session on the Academic Profile was to acquaint faculty members with the types of reports generated from the test results. The results from the Rising Junior Examination for the 00-01, 01-02, and 02-03 academic years will be posted under Institutional Effectiveness on the TSU website. The mean scores are available by each major within each school/college for review by department heads and faculty. There has been ongoing discussion regarding the appropriate use of individual scores and no decision has been made at this point whether these scores should become a part of a student's SIS record during the coming academic year. There are plans to continue to provide information for faculty on the interpretation of these scores and their implications for monitoring student progress. Efforts are also being made to assist the faculty and students to understand the purpose of this test and to ensure that students are motivated to give their best performance when they take this test.

Over the past two years the TSU Office of Institutional Research has further broken down the scores of all students at TSU. They have taken these combined scores and shown numbers of students, mean scores and sub-scores by College/ School and Department. This will continue for the remaining two years of the cycle and will provide a detailed basis for comparison. The VPAA has charged each dean and department chair to analyze these scores both against national means as well as by internal departmental means. One specific goal set by the VPAA for Academic Colleges and Departments for 2003-2004 is to increase both the total number of students taking the ETS Profile (long Form) and the mean scores of their students. Department chairs are also charged with taking individual scores from all students and attempt to compare these scores against students' GPA scores to analyze the benefits of the Rising Junior Exams. This process will become part of the student's acceptance into upper division status and taking upper division course hours.